

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5321
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 4549

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ML, FR, EAID
SUBJECT: FRENCH-MALIAN ECONOMIC TALKS

1. THE 17TH SESSION OF THE FRANCO-MALIAN MIXED COMMISSION MET IN BAMAKO DECEMBER 8. FRENCH DELEGATION WAS LED BY MME YVETTE CHASSAGNE, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION MINISTRY; THE MALIAN BY OUMAR MAKALOU, DIRECTOR OF CABINET, THE PRESIDENCY. FRENCH AMBASSADOR MAZEYRAC AND MALIAN AMBASSADOR TO PARIS HAIDARA ALSO PARTICIPATED.

2. ACCORDING TO COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL DAILY L'ESSOR, MAKALOU PRAISED SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND CHASSAGNE NOTED THIS YEAR'S AGRICULTURAL SUCCESSES. AGENDA ITEMS WERE:

- A. PUBLIC FINANCES;
- B. STATE ENTERPRISES;
- C. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, MONEY AND CREDIT;
- D. DEVELOPMENT AID.

3. COMMUNIQUE STRESSED FAVORABLE HARVEST AND NOTED THAT MALI HAD RECOVERED ITS TRADITIONAL POSITION AS NET EXPORTER OF CEREALS. COTTON PRODUCTION REACHED A NEW RECORD, PLACING MALI SECOND WITHIN FRANC ZONE. PEANUT PRODUCTION WAS EVIDENTLY LESS SPECTACULAR.

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4. THE BUDGET DEFICIT WAS COVERED, STATED COMMUNIQUE, THANKS TO FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING FRANCE. PROBLEMS WITH STATE ENTERPRISES WERE PASSED OFF AS CAUSED BY "IMPORTED" INFLATION. THE DEFICIT IN THE OPERATIONS ACCOUNT (WHICH SUPPORTS MALI FRANC) MUST BE CONSIDERED FROM AN ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT, AND NOT, SAID COMMUNIQUE, SOLELY FROM FINANCIAL ANGLE. MENTION WAS MADE OF CULTURAL TIES, MUTUAL COMPREHENSION AND RESPECT.

5. COMMENT: IN DISCUSSING TALKS WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR MAZEYRAC DECEMBER 13, IN LIGHT OF EVIDENT MALIAN SATISFACTION, DCM ASKED IF FRENCH HAD LEFT ANY ROOM FOR SAUDIS AND OTHERS HELPING MALI. MAZEYRAC SAID A GREAT DEAL HAD BEEN LEFT TO SAUDIS AND ALL OTHERS HELPING MALI. MAZEYRAC SAID FRENCH AID TO MALI WOULD CONTINUE AT PRESENT LEVEL IN NOMINAL TERMS, BUT THAT IT WOULD DECREASE IN REAL TERMS Owing TO INFLATION AND DECLINE IN VALUE OF FRANC. MOREOVER, NUMBER OF FRENCH AID PERSONNEL WOULD BE GRADUALLY CUT BACK. THEY WERE EXPENSIVE, EXPLAINED MAZEYRAC, AND THERE WOULD BE SAVINGS IN THIS AREA.

ONE REASON ADVANCED FOR THIS LOWER LEVEL OF FRENCH AID BY AMBASSADOR WAS INCREASED WILLINGNESS OF OTHER COUNTRIES TO AID MALI. MAZEYRAC SAID FRENCH AID TO MALI HAD BEEN TOO HIGH--ALMOST EQUI-VALENT OF MALI'S NATIONAL BUDGET. HE SAID ANOTHER POINT WAS THAT MALIAN HARVEST HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL: COTTON CROP THIS YEAR WOULD PROBABLY BRING IN CLOSE TO \$80 MILLION IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE. (ENTIRE EXPORT PROCEEDS FOR 1974 AMOUNTED TO ONLY ABOUT \$45 MILLION.)

MAZEYRAC SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO GIVE ONE OVERALL FIGURE FOR ANNUAL FRENCH AID SINCE CERTAIN AMOUNTS WERE, IN THEORY, ONLY TEMPORARY LOANS; \$70 MILLION WAS, HOWEVER, A FAIR FIGURE, SAID MAZEYRAC.
BYRNE

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